

Chapter 1

Urban Outlook

The ambiguous nature of the operational environment requires Army leaders who are self-aware and adaptive. Self-aware leaders understand their operational environment, can assess their own capabilities, determine their own strengths and weaknesses, and actively learn to overcome their weaknesses. Adaptive leaders must first be self-aware—then have the additional ability to recognize change in their operating environment, identify those changes, and learn how to adapt to succeed in their new environment.

FM 1

Given the prevalence of large cities throughout the world, Army forces, division size and larger, will likely be required to conduct operations in and around large urban areas. These operations will be in support of a joint force commander (JFC) conducting military operations pursuant to United States (US) national security policy. This manual is designed to facilitate the planning and conduct of the full range and spectrum of land operations in a complex urban environment. Each urban environment and urban operation is unique; prescribing specific doctrinal “solutions” for situations is impossible. Instead, this manual provides a framework to commanders and their staffs for understanding the urban environment, for analyzing and deciding whether urban operations (UO) are necessary or feasible, and for applying operational doctrine to this complex environment. It also provides historical vignettes to help develop a refined analytical perspective and some planning points and tactics and techniques to assist in preparing for and conducting UO. Together, this information provides a foundation for approaching major UO, which, combined with other joint and Army doctrine, will help commanders and their staffs learn to adapt and succeed in this challenging environment.

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THE PROSPECT OF URBAN OPERATIONS

1-1. The world is in a period of massive urbanization. A trend of migration from rural to urban areas is occurring throughout the globe. This trend is especially evident in developing nations. Combined with the exponential growth of the global population in the last quarter century, this migration has created massive urban areas that hold the centers of population, government, and economics in their respective regions. In Western Europe, for example, over 50 percent of the land area is urbanized. Just over 30 years ago, only three urban areas in Asia contained at least eight million people. By 2015, estimates show that Asia will have 17 urban areas over ten million, and three of those will top 20 million residents. Almost half of today's population resides in urban areas. Trends also indicate that less developed nations have more centralized societies in a few urban areas. Developed nations spread their centralized societies in several urban areas. In many cases, rapid urbanization has overburdened already weak infrastructures, scarce resources, and a fragile economic base. Given the global population, Army forces will likely conduct operations in and around urban areas—*not as a matter of fate but as a deliberate choice linked to national objectives and strategy and at a time, place, and method of the commander's choosing.*

Army Urban Operations

Army forces conduct UO either as one component of a larger operation or as a single operation focused totally on a specific urban environment. Major Army UO are often part of a joint and multinational effort requiring interagency and civil-military coordination that may include the full spectrum of Army operations. Commanders of Army major operations must determine if UO are essential to mission accomplishment. If so, commanders must carefully integrate the operations into campaign planning to support the operational objectives of the JFC.

Army leaders conducting UO must—

- Assess the urban area to determine decisive points.
- *Shape* the operation to set the conditions for success.
- Precisely mass the effects of combat power to rapidly *dominate* the area.
- Then *transition* the urban area to the control of another agency or back to legitimate civilian control.

URBAN PERSPECTIVE

1-2. As a subset of all Army operations, UO are operations focused on an urban environment. UO include the full range of Army operations—offensive, defensive, stability, and support—that may be executed, either sequentially or simultaneously, during the conduct of a single urban operation. Depending on the mission, enemy, terrain and weather, troops and support available, time available, civil considerations (METT-TC), urban operations may—or may not—be conducted predominantly *within* the urban area (see Figure 1-1). Furthermore, UO may be the sole mission of the commander or one of several tasks nested in a larger operation. Regardless of the types of operations conducted or whether the urban area is the single focus of the operation or only one component of a larger operation, the complex urban environment significantly affects the overall conduct of the mission.

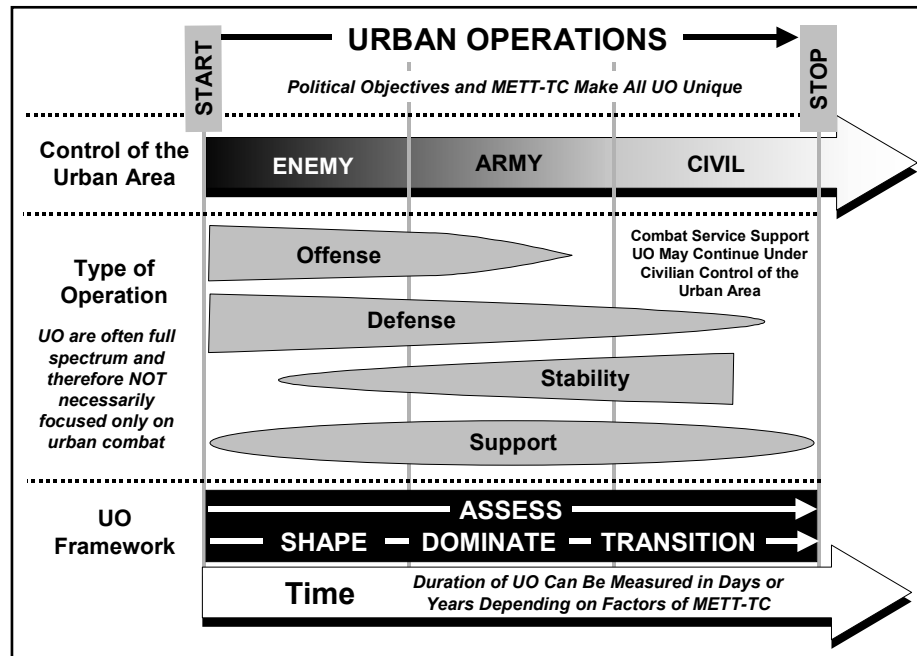


Figure 1-1. Full Spectrum Urban Operations

1-3. When conceptualizing urban operations, commanders understand two important terms: urban area and urban environment. The first is a subset of the second. An **urban area** is a **topographical complex where man-made construction or high population density is the dominant feature**. Focusing on urban areas means concentrating on the physical aspects of the area and their effects on tactics, techniques, and procedures. The **urban environment** includes the **physical aspects of the urban area as well as the complex and dynamic interaction and relationships between its key components—the terrain (natural and man-made), the population, and the supporting infrastructure—as an overlapping and interdependent system of systems**. Critical elements of the infrastructure may lie far beyond the area's physical confines. For example, the generating source providing power to the urban energy system is part of that system but may be located well outside of the urban area. Similarly, effects of the interaction between components of the infrastructure, located both inside and outside the urban area, extend well into smaller, neighboring urban areas and surrounding rural areas and often form their political, economic, and cultural focus. Understanding the total urban environment is essential to planning and conducting the full range of Army urban operations across the spectrum of conflict.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF URBAN AREAS IN WARFARE

1-4. Urban areas always have been central to, or have significantly influenced, military operations. One of the first urban-centered battles was the siege of Troy at the beginning of Greek history. Moreover, much of the history of early Greece revolved around wars between its city-states or with Persia and centered on the conquest, siege, or blockade of cities. Five

hundred years later, the Roman Empire replaced Greece as the dominant world power although urban areas remained central to Roman warfare. Even Rome's history can be viewed as a microcosm of urban warfare over the past two thousand years. Though military operations within the physical confines of many of these historic urban areas were not the norm, *the focus* of these operations was their conquest or control.

Rome A Microcosm of Urban Warfare

During two millennia, Rome has been the center of at least 12 battles. The Gauls lay siege to Rome first in 387 BC. That first siege lasted six months and ended after the barbarians burnt much of the city. The surviving patrician families paid a ransom for the withdrawal of Brennus' army. From 408 to 410 AD, the Goth leader, Alaric, successfully besieged Rome no less than three times. The Byzantine General Belisarius captured Rome twice from the Goths and withstood siege inside the city once between 536 and 549. Five hundred years later in 1084, Norman adventurer Robert Guiscard captured medieval Rome and sacked the city during a dispute between the Pope and the Holy Roman Empire. Forces of the Holy Roman Empire again stormed and captured the city to punish the Pope in 1527. During the Italian Revolution in 1849, a French army supporting the Pope captured the city from the Italian revolutionary army under Garibaldi. In 1944, the last military action took place in and around Rome when the US Fifth Army captured the city from the retreating German army. Rome's turbulent history—fought over ethnic and religious differences, prestige, and military necessity—demonstrates the importance of urban areas in warfare and the various causes and combatants within this complex environment.

1-5. Although Rome last saw combat in 1944, urban areas have been no less prominent in warfare since that time. Beirut in Lebanon, Grozny in Chechnya, and Sarajevo in Bosnia-Herzegovina have been centers of conflict in the last 50 years. Urban areas, now more pervasive than ever before, will continue to be essential to successful operational and strategic warfighting. Today, armies cannot execute major military operations without the influence of surrounding urban environments (with the possible exception of the open desert).

STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF URBAN AREAS

1-6. Several reasons have attracted (and continue to attract) armies to combat in urban areas:

- A military force chooses to position itself in an urban area to capitalize on the perceived advantages offered by the environment. In contrast, an opposing force, by analyzing the factors of the situation, determines that it must enter the urban area to attack and destroy its enemy (or devote essential combat power to their isolation).
- The urban area's infrastructure, capabilities, or other resources have significant operational or strategic value.
- The urban area has significant symbolic importance.

- The urban area's geographical location dominates a region or avenue of approach.

1-7. Russia's 1994 experience in Chechnya illustrates an increasingly important motivation for conducting urban operations. The Chechen rebels, after failing to engage Russian forces outside the city, chose to turn Grozny into the battlefield. Leaders of the defeated Chechen conventional forces recognized that fighting in the urban area provided them their best chance for success. The complexities of urban combat and the perceived advantages of defending an urban area mitigated their numerical and technological inferiority. The urban area provided the Chechens protection from fires, resources, interior lines, and covered and concealed positions and movement. Given such advantages offered by the environment, smaller or less-sophisticated military forces have similarly chosen to fight in urban areas.

1-8. Such advantages of operating in an urban environment also prompt forces to conduct an urban operation to facilitate a larger campaign plan and decisive battle in another location. The urban operation can focus the enemy on the urban area and allow other forces to conduct operations elsewhere. From a defensive perspective, an urban defense may gain time and space to reorganize forces in new defensive positions, to divert enemy forces from other critical tasks, or to prepare to conduct offensive operations. To some extent, these reasons motivated Soviet forces defending Leningrad and Stalingrad from the Germans in World War II. The stubborn defense permitted the Soviets to reorganize for later offensive operations. From an offensive perspective, an attack on an urban area may be a shaping operation used to divert resources from the decisive operation that will follow.

1-9. Armies also fight in an urban area to obtain some critical feature or resource in the area, such as a port facility. The desire to control an important seaport and access to the Persian Gulf largely motivated the Iranian and Iraqi struggle for Basra in the 1980s. Earlier, in 1944, British forces fought German units in Arnhem for control of the Rhine River Bridge. Other infrastructure of the urban environment may have operational or strategic significance and can compel military forces to attack or defend the area. As urban areas account for an increasing share of a country's national income, often generating over 50 percent of gross national product, the strategic implications for their control or influence become even greater.

1-10. Urban areas are often located on terrain that dominates a region or an avenue of approach. In these cases, offensive armies capture these areas to proceed with security to another objective. Conversely, defensive forces commonly defend the area to deny the area of operations. To illustrate, Cassino, Italy stood astride the critical highway approach up the Liri valley to Rome. The allies had to attack and capture the monastery to facilitate the allied offensive north. Cassino's location made bypassing virtually impossible. Likewise, Israeli army urban operations in Beirut were (and have continued to be) a result of its strategic location near the Israeli security zone; various Arab insurgent and terrorist groups used Beirut as a base for attacks against Israel. Beirut evolved as the major base of the Palestine Liberation Organization, a major opponent of Israel. Beirut's location made it a security threat to Israel and thus compelled several major Israeli operations in the urban area (see Appendix A).

1-11. Another reason for engaging in urban operations is the symbolic—historical, cultural, political, and even economic—importance of many urban areas. Often, capital cities—such as Rome, Paris, Seoul, and Berlin—are identified as the strategic centers of gravity of their respective nations. Possessing or threatening these urban areas may impact directly on the outcome of a conflict. The objective of Germany's wars with France in 1870 and 1914 was ultimately Paris. Napoleon's 1812 campaign had as its objective Moscow, as did Hitler's 1941 offensive into Russia. The objective of the Soviet 1945 offensive was Berlin, and the North Vietnamese 1975 offensive had as its objective the South's capital of Saigon. Still, history also reminds us that commanders assess the sustainability and decisiveness of operations directed toward these "prestige" objectives. For example, in 1812, Napoleon captured Moscow but had to evacuate it within 30 days. He lacked supplies and shelter, failed to destroy the Russian Army, and failed to defeat the political will of the Czar and the people. Similarly, the North Korean occupation of Seoul during the Korean War was equally indecisive.

US ARMY'S EXPERIENCE IN URBAN OPERATIONS

1-12. The US Army has a varied history of conducting operations to attack or defend larger urban areas. The American Revolution saw the Army conduct several urban operations. These operations included the unsuccessful defense of New York, the successful attack on Trenton, and the decisive siege and attack on British forces at Yorktown. The Mexican War also had a successful assault on the fortified city of Monterey and the decisive siege of Mexico City. During the American Civil War, the armies, in the tradition of Napoleonic maneuver warfare, avoided urban areas and fought in the open. However, the opposing armies frequently made urban areas their objective because of their importance as railheads. Success in the siege of several key urban areas—Vicksburg, Atlanta, and Petersburg—contributed to the Northern victory.

1-13. Following the Civil War, the US Army faced no large-scale urban combat for several generations. The Indian Wars, the Spanish-American War, the Philippine Insurrection, and even World War I did not require the Army to fight in large urban areas. Between the Civil War and World War II, the US Army fought in several urban areas worldwide supporting US commitments. These limited urban combat operations were small but essential parts of what were urban stability operations. From 1900 to 1901, the Army provided public security for a sector of Peking, China of around 50,000 inhabitants. The Army conducted UO and, in the course of the operation, the 9th US Infantry suffered 20-percent casualties while fighting in Tientsin. Punitive expeditions to places such as Siberia, Cuba, Philippines, Central America, and Mexico put the Army in various urban situations that required using military power, notably, the occupation and security of Vera Cruz, Mexico in 1914. In the context of these smaller-scale contingencies (SSCs), UO became a staple of US Army employment.

1-14. World War II forced the Army to grapple with the issues of large-scale urban combat almost immediately. In his 1941 defense of the Philippines, General MacArthur examined how to defend Manila. Manila represented a large, modern, friendly urban area, which was the capital city of a close US

ally. Defending the urban area posed numerous challenges. Ultimately General MacArthur determined that he could best conduct its defense outside the city by defeating the enemy forces in combat on the invasion beaches or shortly after they landed. When Japanese forces defeated MacArthur's Philippine Army in a series of engagements, MacArthur had to decide how best to protect the friendly populace of Manila. He had two choices: abandoning the city or waging a costly defense that would likely result in the city's destruction, thousands of noncombatant casualties, and no operational advantage. He had little choice but to declare Manila an open city and move his forces to Bataan to wage an operational defense in the vain hope that a counteroffensive could relieve his isolated force. On 2 January 1942, Japanese forces entered Manila unopposed.

1-15. Had General MacArthur decided to defend Manila, his forces would have found scant doctrine in the Army regarding how to fight in an urban area. Doctrine for urban operations did not appear until early 1944, when faced with the possibility of fighting through the larger urban areas of Western Europe. At his time the US Army published FM 31-50, *Attack on a Fortified Position and Combat in Towns*. This manual had the first formal discussion of how the Army viewed urban combat. It was based on the Army's limited experiences in the Mediterranean theater and the study of German and Soviet experiences on the Eastern front.

1-16. FM 31-50 emphasized a deliberate pace, individual and small unit initiative, the liberal use of direct and indirect firepower, and decentralized command and execution. It focused on the urban area (as opposed to the environment); however, it did include policies towards the noncombatants. The manual was also focused at the regimental combat team level. Complementing the doctrine of FM 31-50 was the 1944 operations manual, FM 100-5. This latter manual emphasized the importance of combined arms actions and the need for extensive reconnaissance of prepared and defended cities. The Army successfully implemented this doctrine in several major instances of urban combat, most notably the capture of the first German city, Aachen, and hundreds of small-scale urban assaults on cities, towns, and villages across France, the Benelux, and Germany. Army forces also successfully employed this urban combat doctrine during the liberation of Manila in 1945.

1-17. The legacy of this era of Army operations was an effective tactical solution to urban offensive combat: isolate the urban area, seize a foothold, and expand the foothold block by block until occupying the entire urban area and destroying the enemy. The doctrine's emphasis on firepower kept friendly casualties to a minimum. Unfortunately, when enemy forces stoutly defended the urban area, the emphasis on firepower resulted in its virtual destruction and high casualties among noncombatants.

1-18. The doctrinal approach honed in World War II remained the accepted Army approach to urban combat to the century's end. The last successful implementation occurred when liberating Seoul during the Korean War. The Vietnam conflict did not offer the Army opportunities or the requirement to practice urban combat or test and refine doctrine on a large scale. The largest urban battle, Hue, was a chaotic tactical battle that validated most of the historical lessons of urban combat without generating any new doctrinal insights for large-scale urban warfare.

1-19. From the mid-1950s through the 1990s, the Army conducted UO in the United States in support of civil authorities during civil unrest and anti-Vietnam protests. Some operations involved numerous active and reserve component forces engaged in restoring public order. The Detroit riots of 1967 and the Los Angeles riots of 1992 required the commitments of active and National Guard units. In 1968, the Army deployed over 35,000 troops to Washington D.C., Chicago, and Baltimore following the death of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

1-20. In the 1970s and 1980s, Army doctrine predominantly focused on urban areas and successfully fighting a conventional ground war against Soviet and Warsaw Pact forces in Central Europe. The 1979 FM 90-10, *Military Operations on Urbanized Terrain (MOUT)*, described how to conduct urban operations against Soviet forces in Germany. Its concepts were never tested other than in simulation, and its approach to urban combat was not substantially different from that practiced by the Army since World War II. Despite previous doctrine's admonition to avoid cities, the Army has had to fight in them in diverse circumstances.

MODERN ARMY URBAN OPERATIONS

1-21. Modern urban operations span the full range of possible applications of military power. At the high end of the spectrum of conflict is major theater war (MTW) dominated by offensive and defensive operations that, when undertaken, will commonly include urban operations. At the lowest level are a multitude of urban peacetime military engagement (PME) activities. These activities foster and strengthen alliances and coalitions as well as deter aggression on the part of potential threats. At mid-level between MTW and PME are SSC urban operations. As a result of being mid-range, any type of operation may potentially dominate an SSC; however, the various urban stability operations form the majority. At higher echelons, these separations are often viewed as levels of intensity. For the tactical units conducting urban operations, these divisions appear indistinct, as the intensity is often high despite where the operation falls within the level of conflict.

MAJOR THEATER WAR

1-22. While UO in a MTW can encompass the full range of Army operations, the offense and defense will be central and decisive to success. Although mindful of collateral damage and noncombatants, urban operations in a MTW (compared to urban operations in SSCs or as part of PME activities) will be the least constrained because vital national interests will be at stake. UO in a MTW, therefore, will require a significant investment of resources of all types. Specialized units such as psychological operations, civil affairs, and other special operations forces (SOF) will likely be in high demand. UO in a MTW will require an abundance of infantry and may require significant casualty replacements and medical support. Logistics to support the distinctive urban environment includes large amounts of lethal and nonlethal specialty munitions, such as smoke, precision field artillery rounds, demolitions, and hand grenades.

1-23. Of potential urban scenarios confronting the future Army, urban offensive and defensive operations in an MTW are the most dangerous and

challenging. They will take one of two principal forms: fluid or siege. In a fluid urban combat operation, both sides may contend for position and advantage in the urban battlespace. The attacker will seek to quickly seize decisive points before the enemy is able to establish a cohesive defense. This will likely require the attacker to bypass enemy defensive positions whose occupation or reduction are not critical to mission success. Conversely, the defender may use interior lines to shift forces in a fluid defense. In a siege, one side clearly has the initiative as the attacker, and the other side has the advantages of the defense. A siege situation can develop as a result of an initial fluid urban battle, or it may be a function of previous military operations that occurred outside the urban area. The Army doctrine's emphasis on initiative, agility, depth, synchronization, and versatility generally supports the fluid form of urban combat; however, commanders also understand that the factors of METT-TC may support a longer-term, siege approach.

SMALLER-SCALE CONTINGENCIES

1-24. SSCs encompass a wide range of military operations that fall between MTW and PME and frequently involve urban operations. SSCs are conducted to facilitate diplomacy and support political initiatives, protect American lives and interests, and disrupt illegal activities. Joint task forces (JTFs) typically conduct SSCs although one service may provide the bulk of the force. During these urban contingencies, resources are often more limited and the restraints on applying combat power are greater as the need to maintain legitimacy will grow in importance. Typically, Army forces will need the assistance of multinational partners, other agencies, local noncombatants, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to successfully complete the mission.

PEACETIME MILITARY ENGAGEMENTS

1-25. UO, at the lowest level of conflict, may also take many forms. They serve to strengthen alliances and coalitions, discourage arms races, combat terrorism, and generally reduce the potential for instability and conflict. Combat in PME activities is not the norm. They are least likely to involve the use of force (when necessary, nonlethal is preferred). The presence of Army forces performing PME activities in foreign urban areas provides a visible sign of US commitment to peace and stability in that region. In many of these lower-intensity UO, Army forces often support other agencies. These other agencies actually plan and lead the operation. Army forces provide military capabilities (to include organization and leadership), manpower, equipment, and other resources not readily available. As with UO in SSCs, proactive and aggressive interaction and coordination with multinational partners, governmental and nongovernmental organizations, and the urban populace will be vital to success.

PREPARING FOR FUTURE URBAN OPERATIONS

1-26. To operate successfully in a complex urban environment requires rigorous, realistic UO training. Training is conducted by the complete combined arms team and covers the full range of Army operations. It also replicates—

- The psychological impact of intense, close combat against a well-trained enemy.
- The effects of noncombatants in close proximity to Army forces.
- The medical and logistic problems associated with operations in an urban area.

It recognizes the constraints of collateral damage and, therefore, emphasizes the development of flexible, effective, and understandable rules of engagement (ROE). These ROE help preclude soldiers from randomly using deadly force while allowing them sufficient latitude to accomplish the mission and defend themselves. Training in ROE also includes significant and periodic changes that test and develop flexibility in and adaptability to a fluid environment. Additionally, force preparedness mandates integrating simulations, exercises at urban training sites, and the actual use of urban terrain into tactical- and operational-level intra- and interservice training. Concurrent training extends from the individual soldier to the joint level. Additionally, preparedness also includes enhancing interoperability in regards to urban multinational and interagency operations.

1-27. Realistic UO training (as well as the conduct of real world operations) has the added benefit of identifying operational requirements and resultant changes necessary in our doctrine, organizations, materiel design, leadership, and soldier support (see Figure 1-2). While technology (materiel) and organizational changes are critical, soldiers remain the decisive means for success. The technology and

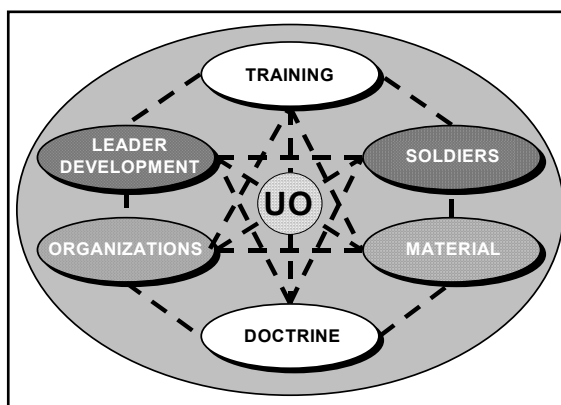


Figure 1-2. UO and the Army Imperatives

organizational changes will be a critical enabler to achieve the agile, simultaneous, and precise lethality required in urban operations. In the future, technology may lead to a radically new operational concept and approach to urban operations. Still, competent leaders and well-trained and disciplined soldiers will remain the decisive means for the Army to succeed in this complex, multidimensional, and noncontiguous urban environment.